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INFO RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1539

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002632

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DEPARTMENT FOR IO, NEA/ELA AND NEA/IPA
PARIS ALSO FOR USMISSION TO UNESCO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/10/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SCUL](#) [UNESCO](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: KING: JORDAN MAY BRING MUGHRABI GATE TO
INTERNATIONAL ARENA

REF: A. TEL AVIV 2043

- [1](#)B. AMMAN 2483
- [1](#)C. AMMAN 2453
- [1](#)D. AMMAN 2147
- [1](#)E. AMMAN 1998
- [1](#)F. AMMAN 1483
- [1](#)G. AMMAN 536
- [1](#)H. AMMAN 394

Classified By: Ambassador R. Stephen Beecroft,
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) King Abdullah voiced his concerns to Ambassador on September 7 about Israel's plans for a new ascent to the Mughrabi Gate entrance to the Temple Mount/Haram Al-Sharif. Repeating and emphasizing points that Jordanian officials have raised with increasing urgency over the past few weeks (reftels), the King highlighted his special responsibilities regarding Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, and said he could not be seen to abdicate that custodial role. He described the situation as "volatile" and stressed that Israel must adhere to the multilateral process (i.e., work through UNESCO). The King said Jordan will look into all possible legal international avenues if Israel seeks to move forward unilaterally.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: In the absence of visible progress in the peace process, the King sees Israeli unilateralism on this issue as exacerbating an already tense regional situation. Furthermore, his status as custodian of the Haram Al-Sharif provides a significant boost to his internal legitimacy and, consequently, a vulnerability if he is seen as unable to influence Israeli actions. The GOJ has no desire to see damage done to its relations with Israel, but the Mughrabi Gate issue may well be one that the King feels he simply cannot let pass without a strong, and visible, response. End Comment.

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Beecroft